

Confined Spaces

8 ways to recognize a confined space

Do you know what a confined space is? Do you know why it is dangerous? These are characteristics of a confined space:

- It is large enough that a person can enter it to work.
- It has limited or restricted access and exits.
- It is not designed for continuous human occupancy.
- It may have a hazardous atmosphere, such as flammable vapors, toxic gases or too little oxygen.
- It may have the danger of engulfment by liquids or solids such as granular material.
- It may have a shape which could cause entrapment, such as a sloping floor which tapers down to a narrow point.
- It may contain other hazards such as moving machinery, chemical substances or electrical equipment.
- These are examples of confined spaces: vessels, tanks, vats, manholes, sewer tunnels, elevator shafts, storage bins, hoppers, holds of ships, cisterns, pits, boilers, stacks, pumping stations and equipment housings.

5 REASONS PEOPLE DIE IN CONFINED SPACES

- They don't recognize a confined space.
- They assume the space is safe because they cannot smell gas or vapor, or because it "looks" okay.
- They underestimate the danger. They think they can escape before they are overcome by the hazard.
- They let their guard down after they enter the confined space and do not realize a hazard is developing.
- They try to rescue others, but are not equipped to do so safely.

FACT or FICTION?

FICTION: The only people who need to know about the dangers of confined spaces are those who actually work in them.

FACT: You need to know about the dangers of confined spaces — even if you don't work in them. Then you'll know better than to enter a confined space unprepared, even to rescue someone.

3 SURVIVAL STRATEGIES



1 Get training so you will recognize hazards and know how to avoid them.



2 Learn how to use the special protective equipment necessary for confined space work.



3 Follow your company's policies including the confined space entry permit system. This will ensure you are properly prepared and protected from hazards. Other personnel, also equipped for confined space entry, will be on stand-by for rescue if something goes wrong.